

Vancouver Rail Project



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The Vancouver Rail Project, located in Vancouver, Washington, will help reduce rail line congestion through the Vancouver rail yard, which is one of the busiest rail yards in the region.

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More than 100 trains pass through the Vancouver rail yard each day. It serves as a major hub for freight and passenger rail traffic, including freight rail traffic bound for the Port of Vancouver and Amtrak Cascades service traveling north and south through Vancouver.

What are the project benefits?

This project will reduce congestion, increase safety, and allow for more frequent, reliable Amtrak Cascades service. New bypass tracks will be constructed to allow east bound freight trains to avoid the congested yard. This will improve the movement of all trains in this area.

Currently, people who drive or walk through the rail yard on West 39th Street must cross seven sets of rail bypass tracks. The new rail construction will increase this total to nine sets of tracks. A vehicle/pedestrian overpass (bridge) on W. 39th St. will be constructed to enhance safety at the railroad crossing.

What did we learn from value engineering?

In November 2005, WSDOT conducted an intensive engineering review, called value engineering, to improve the project design and reduce costs. As a result, WSDOT and the city are working together on the design of the bridge and surrounding roadway to keep



Conceptual drawing of project.

the project on budget. The roadway width was minimized and the storm water design incorporated the latest retention technology. BNSF Railway is also revising the design of the bypass tracks to reduce costs and impacts. The bypass was reduced from two tracks to one track and the new siding track was shortened. Similar capacity will be created by re-configuring some existing tracks elsewhere near the rail yard at a lower cost.

Who’s involved with project design and construction?

Washington State Department of Transportation is the lead agency on the bridge design, construction, and public involvement and is responsible for overall project delivery.

The City of Vancouver serves in an advisory role on the rail work, and will review and approve designs and plans for bridge and road/rail crossing work.

The city also has a public involvement liaison to the city council and will coordinate communications with the neighborhood associations and Clark County.

BNSF Railway owns the tracks and is leading the rail design and construction.

How has the community shaped this project?

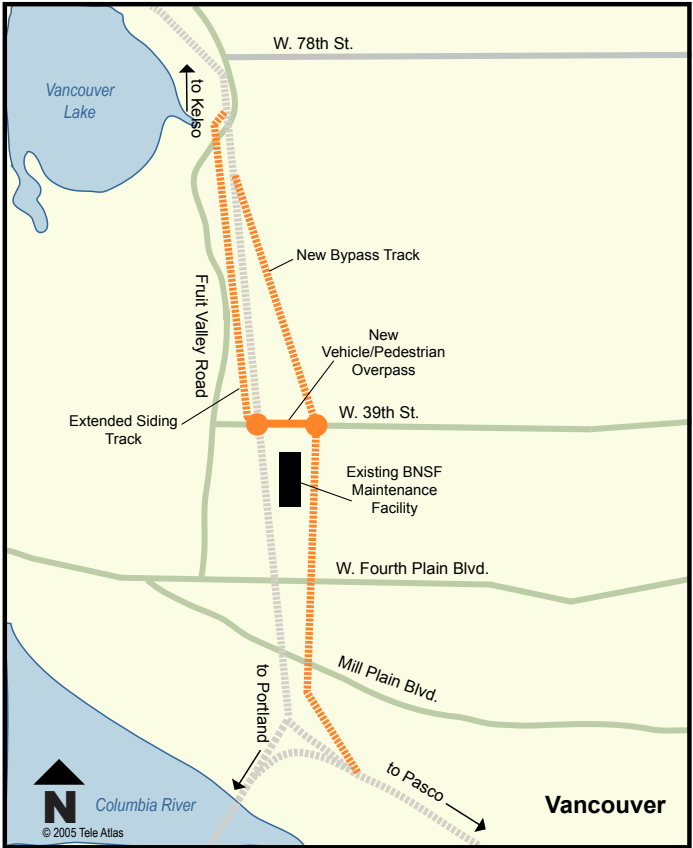
Community input was key in reaching the decision to build a West 39th Street overpass above the railroad tracks.

Between 1999 and 2002, the Vancouver Rail Project benefited from significant public input. Residents provided input into the development of the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and participated through public comment, public open houses, newsletters, and a public hearing. A Community Resource Team, made up of 18 local citizens representing community and regional needs, helped the project team develop and shape project alternatives.

Key issues identified by the community are: noise, access, safety, and community impacts. The project team will continue to address these issues through public involvement during project design and construction stages. The project team continues to work with the community, keeping them up-to-date through quarterly project updates and community leader meetings.

Project Timeline

- **1999:** Conceptual design on the project began, and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process to evaluate potential project impacts began with project scoping later that year.
- **May 2003:** Final EIS incorporated public agency input and guidance as well as public comments.
- **August 2003:** A Record of Decision, confirming the rail overpass construction and westerly bypass tracks as the preferred alternative, was issued by the Federal Highway Administration.
- **November 2005:** Value Engineering Study completed on the project. This intensive engineering review looked at ways to save time and money, without sacrificing quality.
- **January 2006:** Began re-design of bridge and roadway improvements.
- **May 2006:** Began re-design of rail track improvements.
- **November 2007:** Rail Construction begins on west side of main tracks.
- **September 2008:** W 39th grade crossing closed.
- **May 2009:** Construction of W 39th St. Bridge and roadway improvement begins.
- **Winter 2010** – Bridge and roadway construction completed.
- **Summer 2013** – Rail construction completed.



Financial Information

This project is funded through the following sources:

2003 Legislative Transportation Package

(New & Used Vehicle Sales Tax) - \$53.8 million

Existing Funds (pre-existing state, federal, and other partnership funds) - \$96.6 million

Total Funding From All Sources - \$150.4 million